

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0929

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS HELSINKI 0198

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, FI

SUBJECT: PARTY LEADERS TO MEASURE DEGREE OF PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT
FOR LAW CONTINUING PRESIDENT KEKKONEN IN OFFICE WITHOUT
ELECTION

REF: HELSINKI 0128

1. ACTING PRIME MINISTER AHTI KARJALAINEN HOSTED
LUNCHEON MEETING FRIDAY, JAN 28, OF LEADING FIGURES FROM
THE SIX FINNISH POLITICAL PARTIES THAT HAVE EXPRESSED
SUPPORT FOR RE-ELECTION OF PRES KEKKONEN. REPRESENTED
AT MEETING WERE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SDP),
COMMUNIST-FRONT PEOPLES' DEMOCRATIC LEAGUE (SKDL),
CENTER PARTY, CONSERVATIVE PARTY, LIBERAL PARTY, AND
SWEDISH PEOPLES' PARTY. NOT INCLUDED WERE PARTIES WHICH
DO NOT SUPPORT KEKKONEN'S RE-ELECTION: CHRISTIANS LEAGUE
AND TINY RIGHT-WING GROUPS. THE PARTIES SUPPORTING
KEKKONEN'S RE-ELECTION REPRESENT OVER 90 PERCENT OF
FINNISH VOTERS, ALTHOUGH NO ONE BELIEVES ALL OF THESE
PARTIES' VOTERS WOULD VOTE FOR KEKKONEN, IF GIVEN A
CHANCE.

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2. IT SEEMS INCREASINGLY LIKELY THEY WILL NOT, IN
FACT, GET THAT CHANCE. AT FRIDAY MEETING IT WAS
DECIDED THAT EACH PARTY SHOULD CANVAS ITS MP'S TO
DETERMINE HOW MANY OF THEM WOULD SUPPORT PARLIAMENTARY
MOTION TO CONTINUE PRES KEKKONEN IN OFFICE FOR 1978-84
PRESIDENTIAL PERIOD. PARTY LEADERS ARE TO REPORT BACK

TO KARJALAINEN BY FEB 8. KARJALAINEN TOLD PRESS THAT IF RESULTS ARE FAVORABLE, I.E., AT LEAST FIVE/SIXTHS OF MP'S VOTING SUPPORT IDEA OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW GIVING KEKKONEN NEW TERM, THEN MATTER IS CLEAR AND PARLIAMENTARY LAW ROUTE WILL BE TAKEN. IF, HOWEVER, RESPONSE IS NEGATIVE, I.E., CONSTITUTIONAL BLOCKING MINORITY OF MORE THAN ONE/SIXTH OF MP'S VOTING OPPOSE MOTION IDEA, THEN MATTER WOULD MOVE FORWARD TO NORMAL PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

3. KARJALAINEN SAID SELECTING PRESIDENT IS BIG POLITICAL AND QTE FOREIGN POLICY UNQTE DECISION. HE INDICATED HE DOES NOT CONSIDER SUCH A PARLIAMENTARY ACTION AS CONSTITUTING QTE EXCEPTIONAL LAW UNQTE, BECAUSE IT WOULD NOT BE A GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVE AS IN 1973, BUT RATHER AN EXPRESSION OF WILL OF PARLIAMENT. HE GAVE TO UNDERSTAND GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ITSELF INITIATE AN EXCEPTIONAL LAW AS IN 1973.

4. EDITORIAL REACTION WAS NEGATIVE IN THE INDEPENDENT HELSINGIN SANOMAT, CONSERVATIVE PARTY ORIENTED, UUSI SUOMI, AND SWEDISH-LANGUAGE HUFVUDSTADSBLADET. CENTER PARTY PAPER SUOMENMAA SUPPORTED KARJALAINEN INITIATIVE, WHILE SOC. DEM PAPER DEMARI AND COMMUNIST KANSAN UUTISET HAVE YET TO COMMENT EDITORIALY. HELSINGIN SANOMAT WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF KARJALAINEN'S INTERJECTING FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATION INTO DEBATE OVER METHOD OF PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION.

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5. HELSINGIN SANOMATE BEGAN IMMEDIATELY TO COUNT MP HEADS IN EFFORT TO GUESS WHETHER THERE WOULD BE ENOUGH MP'S OPPOSED TO BLOCK MOTION (34 OPPOSING VOTES WOULD BE NEEDED TO BLOCK MOTION IF ALL 200 MP'S PRESENT AND VOTING). THE PAPER COUNTED ABOUT 20 DIFINITELY OPPOSED AND SIMILAR NUMBER POSSIBLY OPPOSED. PAPER ALSO REPORTED GENERAL OPINION, SHARED EVEN BY SOME OPPOSING PROCEDURE, THAT PARTIES CAN DRUM UP SUFFICIENT SUPPORT TO ASSURE PASSAGE OF MEASURE. HELSINGIN SANOMAT IMPLIED THAT ONE-BY-ONE CANVASSING OF MP POSITIONS WOULD PLACE GREAT PRESSURE ON INDIVIDUAL MP'S WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE OPPOSE IF GIVEN CHANCE TO VOTE SECRETLY IN PARTY MEETING.

6. EMBASSY HAS SERIES OF POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS THIS WEEK AND WILL REPORT FURTHER.
HOUSTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 31-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Document Source: CORE
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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